

Conus bahamensis n. sp., a name for an elusive cone

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INTRODUCTION:

The identity of *Conus caribbaeus* Clench, 1942 is based on one specimen, the holotype, from off Palm Beach Co., Florida and two specimens, paratypes, from New Providence, Bahamas. Already WALLS [1979] considered *Conus caribbaeus* to be a synonym of *Conus flavescens* Sowerby, 1834 which he wrongly identified as *Conus magellanicus* Hwass in Bruguière, 1792, assuming the type of *Conus magellanicus* to be an unusual specimen. COOMANS et al. (1983) also came to the conclusion that *Conus caribbaeus* only represents a colour form of *Conus flavescens*. VINK (1987) supported these views and pictured the holotype of *Conus caribbaeus* together with another, also white specimen of *Conus flavescens*, showing their similarity.

Meanwhile, however, various collectors and dealers identify another species of *Conus*, subsequently discovered in the Bahamas, as *Conus caribbaeus* Clench, 1942. VINK (1987) pointed out that this identification is in error, and that probably a new, distinct species is involved.

We have tried to find more specimens of this elusive species and studied the extensive da Motta collection of Conidae now deposited in the Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde in Stuttgart, Germany. Three specimens of "*Conus caribbaeus*" from this collection are *Conus flavescens*, but one specimen of "*Conus caribbaeus*" does correspond to the new species. Da Motta obtained this specimen ex collection Bitler. With this specimen selected as the holotype we are now in a position to give the new species a proper name.

DESCRIPTION:

Conus bahamensis n. sp.

Figures 1, 2, 3

Conus caribbaeus Clench - KAICHER (1977): card n° 1041 (not *Conus caribbaeus* Clench, 1942).

Conus caribbaeus Clench - LOZET & PETRON (1977): n° 198, p. 108, 110, 111 (not *Conus caribbaeus* Clench, 1942).

Conus species n° 1 - VINK (1987): figs. 3c & 4b (paratype 2), 4a (paratype 1)

Type material

Holotype: Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde, Stuttgart, Germany, SMNS-ZI-8660, 31.1 x 16.8 mm. Dredged in 40 fms off Cat Cay, Bahamas. (Figures 1-3).

Paratype 1: 28.5 x 14.9 mm, from Bahamas, coll. Röckel. (Figure 4).

Paratype 2: 26.6 x 15.4 mm, from Cat Island, Bahamas, in coll. Vink.

Distribution

Only known from the Bahamas with record from Cat Island.

Description

Shell of moderate size (length 25-31 mm). Last whorl pyriform, relative diameter (maximum diameter/aperture height) 0.66-0.67. Spire of moderate height (relative spire height 0.19-0.21), slightly stepped; outline concave. Protoconch eroded. 8-9 teleoconch whorls. First 4-6 teleoconch whorls slightly tuberculate. Last teleoconch sutural ramps with one broad spiral groove and with fine axial striae. Last whorl smooth except for 8-10 spiral ribs near base. Aperture narrow. Colour yellowish-white, usually with a broad whitish band at centre of last whorl and near the shoulder.

DISCUSSION

Conus bahamensis n. sp. is similar to *Conus mindanus* Hwass in Bruguière, 1792, *Conus flavescens* Sowerby, 1834, and *Conus puncticulatus* Hwass in Bruguière, 1792. *Conus mindanus* (Figures 5, 6) can be distinguished by its conical last whorl, the straight outline of the spire, deep concave sutural ramps and the lack of tubercles on the teleoconch whorls. *Conus flavescens* (Figure 7) has a more narrow last whorl (relative diameter 0.58-0.61) with almost straight outline; its spire has a straight outline and concave sutural ramps. *Conus puncticulatus* (Figures 8, 9) is smaller (<25 mm) with a bluish violet ground colour (white in the population known as *Conus columba*) and often a brown pattern, it has an ovately shaped last whorl and a carinate shoulder; its anterior end is more distinctly twisted.

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8660, which now has been selected the holotype of *Conus bahamensis* n. sp.

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Figures 1-9 (opposite page).

- Figures 1, 2, 3: Holotype of *Conus bahamensis* n. sp. (dorsal side, ventral side, spire).
 Figure 4: Paratype 1 of *Conus bahamensis* n. sp. (dorsal side).
 Figures 5, 6: *Conus mindanus* Hwass in Bruguière, 1792 (dorsal side and spire). Coll. Röckel, 35.9 x 19.6 mm; Florida.
 Figure 7: *Conus flavescens* Sowerby, 1834. Coll. Röckel, 23.8 x 12.0 mm; Bahamas.
 Figures 8, 9: *Conus puncticulatus* Hwass in Bruguière, 1792 (dorsal and ventral side). Coll. Röckel, 23.4 x 13.1 mm; Guadeloupe.

